

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00
USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 /073 W
-----007031 071935Z /47

O R 071639Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6897
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 445

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, RH
SUBJ: RHODESIA - THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

1. SUMMARY: IN ACCEPTING THE NEW "TRANSITIONAL GOVT" IN SALISBURY, CHIRAU, SITHOLE AND MUZOREWA HAVE IN ESSENCE AGREED TO JOIN SMITH'S GOVT IN RETURN FOR SAHRED EXECUTIVE POWER AMBIGUOUSLY DEFINED AND, EQUALLY IMPORTANT, SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR GOVT ACTIONS, INCLUDING THOSE IN THE DEFENSE FIELD. THERE ARE MANY UNANSWERED QUESTIONS OF AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY AND THE ARRANGEMENT COULD WELL FALL APART ANY TIME OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. MUZOREWA COULD CONCEIVABLY PULL BACK FROM THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT SHOULD HE BECOME FRUSTRATED WITH IT AND ALSO PERCEIVE A MORE ATTRACTIVE ALTERNATIVE. BUT, HE IS NOT LIKELY TO TURN HIS BACK ON THE AGREEMENT UNTIL HE SEES HOW IT PERFORMS. ASIDE FROM A CHANGE IN THE MILITARY SITUATION, NEW
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SETTLEMENT POSSIBILITIES DEPEND UPON REALIGNMENTS AMONG THE NATIONALIST FORCES. END SUMMARY

2. IN THE MARCH 3 ACCORD IN SALISBURY, IAN SMITH HAS SIGNED ON THE LINE FOR MAJORITY RULE AND PRESUMABLY HIS OWN FINAL STEPDOWN AS WELL. THE INTERIM SET-UP, HOWEVER, IS NOT A NEW TRANSITION REGIME AS SUCH, FOR

THE ESSENTIAL STRUCTURE OF THE RHODESIAN FRONT GOVT STILL EXISTS AND POWER REMAINS IN THE HANDS OF SMITH AND HIS PARTY. EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY, AT LEAST IN THEORY, IS SHARED BY SMITH AND THE THREE BLACK LEADERS, BUT DESPITE THE PRESENCE OF A BLACK MAJORITY ON THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, THE CONSENSUS RULE ASSURES THAT NO CHANGES IN THE STATUS QUO CAN BE MADE WITHOUT SMITH'S CONCURRENCE.

3. THE BLACK LEADERS ARE LIKELY TO DISCOVER THAT SMITH REMAINS PRIME MINISTER IN FACT AS WELL AS NAME. THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL, WHICH RETAINS THE WHITE CABINET MINISTERS AND PLACES A THEORETICALLY CO-EQUAL BLACK AT HIS SIDE, IS ONLY ADVISORY. THE RHODESIAN FRONT-DOMINATED PARLIAMENT CONTINUES IN EXISTENCE. THUS, CHIRAU, SITHOLE AND MUZOREWA HAVE IN ESSENCE AGREED TO JOIN SMITH'S GOVT IN RETURN FOR SHARED EXECUTIVE POWER AMBIGUOUSLY DEFINED, AND, EQUALLY IMPORTANT, SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR GOVT ACTIONS, INCLUDING THOSE IN THE DEFENSE FIELD.

4. THE AGREEMENT REFLECTS SMITH'S REMARKABLE AND EFFECTIVE DOGGEDNESS. HE HAS BEEN WORKING FOR SOME TIME WITH THE IDEA OF A BROAD-BASED GOVT IN MIND. APPROXIMATELY THREE YEARS AGO, SMITH BROUGHT INTO THE GOVT FOUR BLACK MINISTERS
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WHO WERE, AT THAT TIME, DENOUNCED AS PUPPETS BY THE OUTSIDE. HE HAS BASICALLY DONE THE SAME AGAIN, ADDING WHAT IS IN EFFECT SEVERAL BLACK MINISTERIAL AND EXECUTIVE ADVISORS TO HIS EXISTING GOVT STRUCTURE. AS ANTHONY RIDER PUTS IT IN THE MARCH 4 RAND DAILY MAIL, " IN CONSTITUTIONAL TERMS, ALL THAT IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN IS AN EXTENSIVE CABINET RESHUFFLE... EFFECTIVE POWER STAYS WITH MR. SMITH AND HIS PARTY".

5. THERE ARE MANY UNANSWERED QUESTIONS OF AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY IN THIS ARRANGEMENT THAT COULD PLAGUE THE CONSENSUS ADMINISTRATION. ONE OF THE MOST STRIKING THINGS ABOUT THE AGREEMENT, IN FACT, IS ITS VAGUENESS AND LACK OF DETAIL. THIS IS A FEATURE THAT HAS BEEN EVIDENT THROUGHOUT THE SALISBURY TALKS AS REFLECTED IN THOSE MINUTES WE HAVE RECEIVED. THE BLACK LEADERS HAVE COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO AN AGREEMENT WHICH DOES NOT EVEN PROVIDE A BROAD FRAME-
WORK OF CONSENSUS ON THE KEY ELEMENTS OF THE INDEPENDENCE CONSTITUTION, QUESTIONS OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE ARMED FORCES AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION, THE INSTITUTION AND ENFORCEMENT OF A CEASEFIRE,

AND THE MODALITIES FOR INDEPENDENCE ELECTIONS.
THESE AND OTHER QUESTIONS, SUCH AS THE RELEASE OF
DETAINEES AND THE REMOVAL OF DISCRIMINATION, ARE
PASSED OVER WITH A BRIEF REFERENCE AS "RELATED
MATTERS" TO BE DEALT WITH BY THE TRANSITION
GOVT.

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6. THUS, ANY TIME OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, THE
ARRANGEMENT COULD FALL APART IN DISAGREEMENT. AN
IMPASSE COULD DEVELOP IN WORKING OUT THE NEW
CONSTITUTION OR THERE COULD BE A FALLING OUT OVER
SUCH QUESTIONS AS THE SHARING OF POWER DURING THE
TRANSITION PERIOD AND THE CONDUCT OF THE WAR. ON
THESE ISSUES, MUZOREWA MAY OFTEN FIND HIMSELF AT
ODDS WITH HIS THREE COLLEAGUES, AND THIS COULD QUITE
CONCEIVABLY LEAD TO HIS WALKOUT. ALTHOUGH MUZOREWA'S
RECORD OF KNUCKLING UNDER TO SMITH IS NOT A
PROMISING ONE, WE SHARE STEVE LOW'S VIEW (LUSAKA
0684) THAT THE BISHOP MIGHT PULL BACK FROM THE
INTERNAL SETTLEMENT SHOULD HE SEE IN HIS INTEREST
TO DO SO. FOR THIS TO OCCUR, HOWEVER, MUZOREWA
WOULD NOT ONLY HAVE TO BECOME FRUSTRATED WITH THE
WORKINGS OF THE TRANSITION GOVT, BUT ALSO

TO PERCEIVE A MORE ATTRACTIVE ALTERNATIVE. IN ANY
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EVENT, HE IS NOT LIKELY TO TURN HIS BACK ON THE
SALISBURY AGREEMENT UNTIL HE SEES HOW IT PERFORMS.

7. SMITH'S STRONG INTEREST IN ENTICING KNOMO
(CAPE TOWN 0417) (NOTAL) INTO THE DEAL REFLECTS
HIS OWN RECOGNITION OF THE SHAKINESS OF THE INTERIM
ARRANGEMENT AND WHATEVER EMERGES FROM IT. NEVERTHELESS,
WE MUST ASSUME THAT THERE IS A POSSIBILITY
THAT THE SALISBURY GROUP WILL MEET ITS TARGET DATE
OF ONE-MAN, ONE-VOTE ELECTIONS AND A NEW BLACK-LED
STATE BY THE END OF THE YEAR. WHATEVER ITS LIMITATIONS,
THE OPTICS OF THIS NEW ZIMBABWE AS VIEWED IN
THE WEST MIGHT BE QUITE GOOD.

8. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE "INTERIM GOVT",
FOR THE TIME BEING, MAKES IT LESS LIKELY THAN BEFORE
THAT SMITH, SITHOLE AND MUZOREWA WOULD SERIOUSLY
CONSIDER ANYTHING LIKE THE PRESENT TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS
IN THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN OR THAT WE WOULD
BE ABLE TO BRING SUFFICIENT PRESSURE ON THEM TO FORCE
ACCEPTANCE. PROBABLY ONLY A SERIES OF DRAMATIC
MILITARY SUCCESSES BY THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, A COLLAPSE
OF THE INTERIM SET-UP OR A DECISION BY NKOMO TO OPT
INTO THE SALISBURY ACCORD COULD REVIVE
THIS AS A POSSIBILITY.

9. THUS, ASIDE FROM A CHANGE IN THE MILITARY SITUATION,
NEW POSSIBILITIES DEPEND UPON REALIGNMENTS AMONG THE
NATIONALIST FORCES. AN ANGLO-AMERICAN MEETING WITH
THE PF ALONE WOULD NOT GET US FAR. AN EARLY CONFERENCE
OF ALL THE NATIONALIST LEADERS WOULD SEEM TO HAVE LITTLE
CHANCE OF GETTING OFF THE GROUND, BUT IT IS WORTH
MAKING THE EFFORT. TO HAVE ANY CHANCE OF SUCCESS,
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HOWEVER, APPROACHES TO MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE TO ATTEND
SUCH A CONFERENCE WOULD HAVE TO BE MORE ATTRACTIVE
THAN THE ADMONISHMENTS TO THEM FROM NYERERE AND
MACHEL TO "GET OUT" OF THE SALISBURY AGREEMENT
IN RETURN FOR AN UNDEFINED "PLACE" FOR THEM UNDER THE ANGLO-
AMERICAN PLAN. IF IT TOOK PLACE, THE CONFERENCE
ITSELF WOULD HOPEFULLY UNCOVER COMMON GROUND AMONG
THE NATIONALISTS OR LEAD TOWARD NEW POLITICAL ALIGNMENTS

WHICH COULD SERVE AS GROUND FOR IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE AAP OR FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW THIRD ROUTE
TO SETTLEMENT, BASED ON THE AAP PRINCIPLES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGREEMENTS, INTERIM GOVERNMENT, FORM OF GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978CAPET00445
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780103-0172
Format: TEL
From: CAPE TOWN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780399/aaaadgaf.tel
Line Count: 228
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 44d832cc-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3421851
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RHODESIA - THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT
TAGS: PDEV, RH
To: STATE USUN NEW YORK
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/44d832cc-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014